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006/008

Application No.: 10/521,547

Docket No.: JCLA15751

REMARKS**Present Status of the Application**

The examiner has considered the previous argument but rejected the whole claims on a new ground. The examiner cited a new reference US 5,895,584 and rejected Claims 1, 2, 4-9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 8-1353 and further in view of Sakota (US5,895,584). The reasons are as follows:

JP '1353 fails to teach cooling water in the guide sleeve.

However, Sakota discloses a cooling water passage (11) between outer portion (14) and guide sleeve (13) with inlet and outlet for the purpose of cooling the welding heat.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to use cooling air or water, since both are known in the casting art as cooling means taught by Sakota, in JP '353, in order to cool the electrode from the welding heat.

Applicants have amended claims 1 by specifically describing the structure of the cooling passage. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections addressed to claims 1, 2, 4-9 for at least the reasons set forth below.

Discussion of the claim rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)**1. The Examiner fails to point out how could the two cited references JP '1353 and US 5,895,584 be combined.**

As it is mentioned by the Examiner, JP'1353 fails to teach cooling water in the guide sleeve. In JP '1353, it only discloses how to detect the existence of parts by using a detecting current. Neither does it disclose nor does it teach anything about using cooling air or water in the casting art as cooling means.

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How could these two cited references be combined? How could an electrode wherein the existence of parts can be detected by using a detecting current be combined with an movable electrode structure? Even if they are combined, where should the water passage (11) be disposed?

We'd like to ask the Examiner to point out how and why these two cited references JP '1353 and the US5,895,584 could be combined.

2. There are at least the following distinguish features are found between the present invention and US'584.

Please refer to Line 27-50 in Column 6 and Figs. 2 and 6 in US '584, it recites that "the inner cylinder 12 is carved at diametrically opposed peripheral portions thereof over a specific vertical length range to form carved parts 14, 14."(line 30-32); and "The inner cylinder 12 is carved annually at the lower ends of the carved parts 14, 14 over the entire outer periphery so that the forward and the return paths 11a, 11b of the cooling-water passage 11 are communicated with each other."(line 37-41).

Due to the disclosure of US '584, it is known that the forward path 11a and the return path 11b are communicates only at the lower ends of the carved parts 14, 14. At the rest portion rather than the lower ends of the carved parts 14, 14, the forward path 11a and the return 11b are not communicated with each other.

However, in the present invention the whole cooling passage extends circumferentially of the main body.

The currently amended claim 1 is narrowed by specifically describing the structure of the cooling passage. The feature of the amended claim 1 HAS NOT being disclosed or taught by any of the cited references. The amended claim 1 is non-obvious over the cited references and is patentable. The dependent claims according to the amended claim 1 are also patentable.

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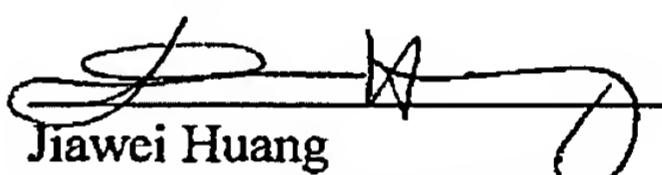
CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is believed that all the pending claims 1, 2, 4-9 of the present application patently define over the prior art and are in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the examination of the above-identified patent application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

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Respectfully submitted,
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